

DDB loses Matt Ross, Michael Udell to King James



By [Herman Manson: @marklives](#)

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[DDB South Africa](#) has lost its deputy MD, [Michael Udell](#), and one of its two executive creative directors, [Matt Ross](#), to [King James](#) in Cape Town.



DDB's blessing

[Emmet O'Hanlon](#), MD at DDB SA, says Udell and Ross, known for working together closely, had some time ago informed DDB that they wanted to work in Cape Town where both live, and that they went out looking for an opportunity to both stay and work in Cape Town with the blessing of DDB.



O'Hanlon says he knew the duo would be likely to leave the agency when he heard that Ross's wife was expecting a baby and that the weekly commute to Johannesburg would become impractical. While he is sad to see them go, his team has had a good amount of time to prepare for the loss.

[Grant Jacobsen](#), the other ECD at DDB, will now handle Ross's clients as well. Jacobson was [hired away from](#) Drafftcb earlier this year amid considerable controversy and threats of legal action from Drafftcb.

Udell will be replaced by Louise Johnston as deputy MD. Johnston is currently the head of account management at DDB. Tsitsi Dhlamini has been appointed deputy head of account management, while Stephan Zimelka remains digital creative director.



Merger mid-2011

DDB SA merged with its digital affiliate agency, [Tribal DDB](#), to form a single agency mid-2011. Udell was the founder and MD of Tribal DDB SA before the merger, while Ross was the ECD. Both worked together at Tribal DDB London prior to that.

The announcement that Ross and Udell had joined King James was [made on Twitter](#) this morning, Monday, 5 December 2011, by Alistair King ([@ALsparkes](#), group creative director of the King James Group. Details of their roles at the agency are yet to be publicly confirmed.

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